

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9184

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 2101

LIMDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV PINT PINS MILI ECON EFIN CB
SUBJECT: GKR PLANS FOR STRENGTHENING WAR EFFORT

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET HAS LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR A MAJOR EFFORT TO (A) BUILD GREATER PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE WAR EFFORT, AND (B) STRENGTHEN HIS GOVERNMENT'S CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT NATIONAL POLICIES MORE EFFECTIVELY DURING THE CRITICAL MONTHS AHEAD. THIS INCLUDES, INTER ALIA, A MORE HARD-HITTING APPROACH TOWARD CORRUPTION IN HIGH PLACES, AUSTERITY IN GOVERNMENT, INCREASED TAXES FOR THE RICH, TOUGHER DISCIPLINE FOR CIVIL SERVANTS, AND EFFORTS TO BRIDGE THE CIVIL-MILITARY GAP. THE PROGRAM IS STILL ONLY ON THE DRAWING BOARD, AND IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW MUCH OF IT THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE ABLE TO PUT INTO EFFECT. NEVERTHELESS, IT REPRESENTS PERHAPS THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE AND SERIOUS EFFORT OF ANY RECENT KHMER GOVERNMENT TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE REPUBLIC. END SUMMARY.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS CABINET DREW UP A COMPREHENSIVE ACTION PROGRAM IN A SERIES OF SEVEN DAY-LONG MEETINGS IN MID-JANUARY. CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM HAVE BEEN REPORTED PREVIOUSLY. THE FOLLOWING, HOWEVER, SUMMARIZES THE PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS IN THE PROGRAM AS A WHOLE. IT IS BASED ON A COPY OF THE MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETINGS WHICH THE PRIME MINSTER GAVE TO THE AMBASSADOR.

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3. NEGOTIATIONS. THE CABINET AGREED TO ESTABLISH A PERMANENT SECRETARIAT IN THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVELOPING NEGOTIATIONS POLICIES AND STRATEGIES. (AN EARLIER PLAN TO ESTABLISH A "NATIONAL COMMITTEE" COMPRIZED OF LEADING OFFICIALS AND OTHER "HIGH PERSONALITIES INTERESTED IN THE PEACE PROBLEM" WAS DISCARDED). A PERMANENT COMMITTEE UNDER THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL CONCORD WAS ALSO ESTABLISHED TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF KC RALLIERS TO THE REPUBLIC SIDE.

4. CORRUPTION. THE CABINET AGREED ON THE NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE ATTACK ON THIS PROBLEM TO INCLUDE: ELIMINATION OF LEGISLATIVE LOOPHOLES WHICH FACILITATE CORRUPTION; GREATER ATTENTION TO ERADICATING CORRUPTION BY GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES; SPEEDIER RESOLUTION OF CASES INVOLVING CHARGES OF CORRUPTION; NEED FOR HIGH OFFICIALS TO SET A GOOD EXAMPLE; NEED FOR RESOLUTE AND RAPID PROSECUTION OF HIGH-LEVEL OFFENDERS; RETIREMENT OF HIGH OFFICIALS HAVING A BAD REPUTATION FOR CORRUPTION; CURB ON UNSUBSTANTIATED PRESS CHARGES OF CORRUPTION. THE CABINET REJECTED THE PRIME MINISTER'S PROPOSAL FOR CREATION OF A NEW MINISTER CHARGED WITH THE ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORT, BUT APPROVED THE CREATION OF A MIXED MILITARY-CIVILIAN "NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CORRUPTION" TO OPERATE "INDEPENDENTLY IN ACTION AND JUDGEMENT" UNDER THE DIRECT AUTHORITY OF THE PRIME MINISTER. IT ALSO APPROVED PUBLICATION OF AN "ANTI-CORRUPTION JOURNAL".

5. GAMBLING. GAMBLING WAS VIEWED AS AN "EXPRESSION OF CONTEMPT" TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE SACRIFICING THEIR LIVES IN DEFENSE OF THE REPUBLIC. CABINET AGREED TO CLAMP DOWN HARD ON GAMBLING IN PHNOM PENH, INCLUDING AMONG OTHER MEASURES THE FIRING OF POLICE OFFICIALS WHO ARE INSUFFICIENTLY ZEALOUS IN ELIMINATING GAMBLING IN THEIR AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY.

6. SUBVERSION. CABINET AGREED TO: THE CREATION OF AN INTERMINISTERIAL COMMITTEE TO RATIONALIZE ALL EXISTING LAWS ON SUBVERSION; A PROGRAM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
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AGAINST SUBVERSIVE THREATS; AND THE NEED FOR IMPROVED COORDINATION BETWEEN INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATIONS. IT INSTRUCTED POLICE TO INVENTORY AND OBTAIN SAMPLES OF ALL PRINTING PRESS AND TYPEWRITER TYPE-FACES TO AID IN TRACING SUBVERSIVE TRACTS.

7. PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES. CABINET WAS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF SUBSTANDARD AND UNDISCIPLINED PERFORM-

ANCE OF CIVILIAN AND MILITARY EMPLOYEES OF THE GOVERNMENT. TO RECTIFY THE SITUATION IT AGREED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, TO INAUGURATE UNSCHEDULED INSPECTION VISITS TO GOVERNMENT OFFICES; TO ENFORCE VIGOROUSLY THE COMMON STATUTES REQUIRING A FULL DAY'S WORK; TO RATIONALIZE USE OF UNDEREMPLOYED WORKERS; AND TO PUT RECALCITRANT CIVILIAN WORKERS OF DRAFT AGE INTO UNIFORM.

8. AUSTERITY MEASURES TO CUT GOVERNMENT COSTS. THE CABINET CARRIED OUT AN APPARENTLY EXHAUSTIVE REVIEW OF WAYS TO CUT COSTS OF GOVERNMENT. IT AGREED TO REDUCE DRASTICALLY THE OPERATING BUDGETS AND SALARIES OF OVERSEAS DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AND TO CUT DOWN ON OFFICIAL

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 PHNOM PENH 2101

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FOREIGN JUNKETS. CABINET ALSO CALLED FOR: BETTER AUDITS OF STATE AND SEMI-STATE ENTERPRISES; THE USE OF FOREIGN CONSULTANTS TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN CERTAIN MAJOR STATE ENTERPRISES; THE INVENTORY AND IMPROVED UTILIZATION OF ALL STATE PROPERTY; THE POOLING OF ADMINISTRATIVE VEHICLES; THE INCREASED USE OF LARGE-CAPACITY BUSES IN PHNOM PENH; THE REFORM OF THE CURRENT HIGHLY TARNISHED SYSTEM OF PAYING FOR GOVERNMENT PURCHASES BY MANDAT; THE ENDING OF THE USE OF AIR CONDITIONERS IN ALL GOVERNMENT OFFICES EXCEPT CONFERENCE ROOMS AND LABORATORIES; AND THE OVERHAUL OF THE SYSTEM OF ISSUING EXIT VISAS, TO INCLUDE PAYMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL FEES BY VISA RECIPIENTS TO BE EARMARKED FOR WAR-WOUNDED

PERSONS AND WAR WIDOWS AND ORPHANS. NO NEW CIVIL EMPLOYEES MAY BE HIRED, UNDER A RECENT ORDER OF THE PRIME MINISTER, NOW RATIFIED BY THE CABINET.

9. INCREASED TAXES FOR PRIVILEGED CLASSES. IN A MOVE TO SHIFT MORE OF THE ECONOMIC BURDENS OF THE WAR FROM THE MASS OF THE POPULATION TO THE RICH, THE CABINET AGREED TO IMPOSE USE TAXES ON AIR CONDITIONERS AND AUTOMOBILES, RAISE TELEPHONE RATES, REVISE LAND TAXES ON LOTS IN PHNOM PENH (SUBJECT TO PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL), AND INCREASE TAXES ON BUSINESS INCOMES AND ON RENTS.

10. SOCIAL, EDUCATION AND YOUTH PROGRAMS. CABINET
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AGREED: TO THE CREATION OF PRIVATE CLINICS IN ORDER TO EASE THE BURDEN ON PUBLIC HOSPITALS; TO EXAMINE WAYS OF HIRING WOUNDED VETERANS; DEVISE IMPROVED POLICIES FOR DEALING WITH PROBLEMS OF WAR WIDOWS AND ORPHANS; TO MAKE BETTER USE OF REFUGEES; TO ENSURE REGULARITY OF STUDIES FOR STUDENTS; TO PORTION OUT WORK SO THAT NO TEACHER IS WITHOUT A JOB; AND TO STUDY MEASURES BY WHICH YOUTH CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE.

11. MILITARY PROGRAM. CABINET AGREED ON THE NEED FOR CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION IN CUTTING DOWN ON DESERTIONS AND REVERIFYING DRAFT EXEMPTIONS ALREADY GRANTED. IT SAW THE NEED TO RETIRE MORE GENERAL OFFICERS, BUT LEFT THAT JOB TO PRESIDENT LON NOL. ELIMINATION OF PHANTOMS, FANK CIVIC ACTION PROGRAMS, AND AUSTERITY IN FANK EXPENDITURES WERE ALSO CALLED FOR.

12. COMMENT: LONG BORET HAS BEGUN A SERIOUS, AND IN SOME AREAS, EXHAUSTIVE EFFORT TO TIGHTEN UP THE EFFICIENCY OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, RATIONALIZE ITS HUMAN AND MATERIAL ASSETS, CUT COSTS, INCREASE REVENUES, AND DEVELOP AN OVERALL PROGRAM DESIGNED TO BUILD A GREATER DEGREE OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC'S WAR EFFORT. IF PAST EXPERIENCE IS A GUIDE, HOWEVER, THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMING THE CABINET DECISIONS INTO ACTION PROGRAMS WILL BE LENGTHY, DIFFICULT AND FRUSTRATING FOR LONG BORET AND HIS TEAM.

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